

Sikhism

Sikhism (/ˈsɪkɪzəm/) or **Sikhi** (Punjabi: ਸਿੱਖੀ *Sikkhī*, [ˈsɪkʰiː], from ਸਿੱਖ, *Sikh*, 'disciple', 'seeker', or 'learner')^[i] is a religion that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent, present-day Pakistan,^[ii] around the end of the 15th century CE.^{[1][2][3][4][5][6]} It is the most recently founded major organized faith, and stands at fifth-largest worldwide^[7] with about 25–30 million adherents (known as *Sikhs*) as of the early 21st century.^{[8][9]}

Sikhism developed from the spiritual teachings of *Guru Nanak* (1469–1539), the faith's first guru,^[10] of the nine *Sikh gurus* who succeeded him. The tenth guru, *Gobind Singh* (1666–1708), named the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* as his successor, bringing to a close the line of human gurus and establishing the scripture as the 11th and last eternally living guru, a religious spiritual/life guide for Sikhs.^{[11][12][13]} *Guru Nanak* taught that living an "active, creative, and practical life" of "truthfulness, fidelity, self-control and purity" is above metaphysical truth, and that the ideal man "establishes union with God, knows His Will, and carries out that Will".^[14] *Guru Hargobind*, the sixth Sikh Guru (1606–1644), established the concept of mutual co-existence of the *miri* ('political'/'temporal') and *piri* ('spiritual') realms.^[15]

The Sikh scripture opens with the *Mul Mantar* (ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤਰ), fundamental prayer about *ik onkar* (ੴ, 'One God').^{[16][17]} The core beliefs of Sikhism, articulated in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, include faith and meditation in the name of the one creator; divine unity and equality of all humankind; engaging in *seva* ('selfless service'); striving for justice for the benefit and prosperity of all; and honest conduct and livelihood while living a householder's life.^{[18][19][20]} Following this standard, Sikhism rejects claims that any particular religious tradition has a monopoly on *Absolute Truth*.^{[iii][21]}

Sikhism emphasizes *simran* (ਸਿਮਰਨ, meditation and remembrance of the teachings of Gurus),^[22] which can be expressed musically through *kirtan*, or internally through *naam japna* ('meditation on His name') as a means to feel God's presence. It teaches followers to transform the "Five Thieves" (i.e. lust, rage, greed, attachment, and ego).^[23]

The religion developed and evolved in times of religious persecution, gaining converts from both Hinduism and Islam.^[24] Mughal rulers of India tortured and executed two of the Sikh gurus—*Guru Arjan* (1563–1605) and *Guru Tegh Bahadur* (1621–1675)—after they refused to convert to Islam.^{[25][26][27][28][29]} The persecution of Sikhs triggered the founding of the *Khalsa* by *Guru Gobind Singh* in 1699 as an order to protect the freedom of conscience and religion,^{[25][30]} with members expressing the qualities of a *Sant-Sipāhī* ('saint-soldier').^{[31][32]}



Symbol of Sikhism

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Terminology

The majority of Sikh scriptures were originally written in the alphabet of *Gurmukhī*, a script standardised by [Guru Angad](#) out of [Laṇḍā scripts](#) historically used in present-day Pakistan and North India.^{[33][34]} Adherents of Sikhism are known as *Sikhs*, meaning 'students' or 'disciples' of the Guru. The anglicised word *Sikhism* derives from the Punjabi verb *Sikhi*, which connotes the "temporal path of learning" and is rooted in the word *sikhana* ('to learn').^{[35][36]}

Philosophy and teachings

Sikhism is classified as an [Indian religion](#) along with [Buddhism](#), [Hinduism](#), and [Jainism](#).^{[iv][v][38]}

The basis of Sikhism lies in the teachings of [Guru Nanak](#) and his successors. Sikh ethics emphasize the congruence between spiritual development and everyday moral conduct. Its founder Guru Nanak summarized this perspective as: "Truth is the highest virtue, but higher still is truthful living."^{[39]:234} Sikhism lays emphasis on *Ēk nūr te sab jag upjiā*, 'From the one light, the entire universe welled up.'

The Best Father

The Definition of Sikh:^[37]

Any human being who faithfully believes in

- i. One Immortal Being,
- ii. Ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib,
- iii. The Guru Granth Sahib,
- iv. The utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and
- v. the baptism bequeathed by the tenth

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion with pantheistic elements, advocating the belief in One Universal God signified by the term *Ik Onkar*.^{[40][41]} In Sikhism, the overall concept of God is *Waheguru* ('wondrous Teacher') considered to be *nirankar* ('shapeless'), *akal* ('timeless'), *karta purakh* ('the creator'), and *agam agochar* ('incomprehensible and invisible').^[42]

Guru, and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion, is a Sikh.

In a literal sense, God has no gender in Sikhism, though metaphorically, God is presented as masculine and God's power as feminine. For example, God is repeatedly referred to by the name *akaal purkh* ('beyond time and space') and *nirankar* ('without form') by the tenth guru Guru Gobind Singh Ji, but he also refers to God as his father, and God's creative power as his mother. Similarly, another example is that the scripture and eternal guru, the Guru Granth Sahib says that all humans are soul-brides who long to unite with their husband Lord.^[43] In addition, the gurus also wrote in the Guru Granth Sahib that there are many worlds on which the transcendental God has created life.^[44]

The Sikh scripture begins with God as *ik onkar* (ੴ), the 'formless one',^{[17][39]:227} understood in the Sikh tradition as monotheistic unity of God.^[45] *Ik onkar* (sometimes capitalized) is more loosely rendered 'the one supreme reality', 'the one creator', 'the all-pervading spirit', and other ways of expressing a diffused but unified and singular sense of God and creation.^[46]

The traditional *Mul Mantar* goes from *ik onkar* until *Nanak hosee bhee sach* Guru Nanak (the first guru of sikhs) is living forever. The existence of guru is eternal. Sach means right, true, real. It means Guru Nanak is real from ages and will remain true. The opening line of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and each subsequent *raga*, mentions *ik onkar*.^[47]

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ
ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

"There is one supreme being, the eternal reality, the creator, without fear and devoid of enmity, immortal, never incarnated, self-existent, known by grace through the true Guru."

*ikk ōankār sat(i)-nām(u) karatā purakh(u)
nirabha'u niravair(u) akāl(a) mūrat(i)
ajūnī saibhan gur(a) prasād(i).*

—*Guru Granth Sahib* (17th c.), p. 1

Worldly Illusion

Māyā, defined as a temporary illusion or "unreality", is one of the core deviations from the pursuit of God and salvation: where worldly attractions give only illusory temporary satisfaction and pain that distracts from the process of the devotion of God. However, Nanak emphasised *māyā* as not a reference to the unreality of the world, but of its values. In Sikhism, the influences of ego, anger, greed, attachment, and lust, known as the *pānj chor* ('five thieves'), are believed to be particularly distracting and hurtful. Sikhs believe the world is currently in a state of *kali yuga* ('age of darkness') because the world is led astray by the love of and attachment to *māyā*.^[48] The fate of people vulnerable to the five thieves, is separation from God, and the situation may be remedied only after intensive and relentless devotion.^[49]

Timeless Truth

According to Guru Nanak, the supreme purpose of human life is to reconnect with *Akal* ('The Timeless One'), however, egotism is the biggest barrier in making this connection. Using the Guru's teaching remembrance of *nām* (the divine Name of the Lord)^{[50][51]} leads to the end of egotism. Guru Nanak designated the word *Guru* ('teacher')^[52] to mean the voice of "the spirit": the source of knowledge and the guide to salvation.^[53] As *ik onkar* is universally immanent, *Guru* is indistinguishable from *Akal* and are one and the same.^[54] One connects with *Guru* only with accumulation of selfless search of truth.^[55] Ultimately the seeker realises that it is the consciousness within the body which is the seeker/follower of the Word that is the true *Guru*. The human body is just a means to achieve the reunion with Truth.^[54] Once truth starts to shine in a person's heart, the essence of current and past holy books of all religions is understood by the person.^[56]



An Akali-Nihang Sikh Warrior at Harmandir Sahib, also called the Golden Temple

Liberation

Guru Nanak's teachings are founded not on a final destination of heaven or hell, but on a spiritual union with the *Akal*, which results in salvation or *jivanmukti* ('enlightenment/liberation within one's lifetime'),^[57] a concept also found in Hinduism.^[58] Guru Gobind Singh makes it clear that human birth is obtained with great fortune, therefore one needs to be able to make the most of this life.^[59]

Sikhs accept reincarnation and karma concepts found in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, but do not necessarily infer a metaphysical soteriology akin to those found in those other religions.^{[59][60][61]} However, in Sikhism, both karma and liberation "is modified by the concept of God's grace" (*nadar*, *mehar*, *kirpa*, *karam*, etc.).^[58] Guru Nanak states that "the body takes birth because of karma, but salvation is attained through grace."^[62] To get closer to God, Sikhs: avoid the evils of *maya*; keep the everlasting truth in mind; practice *shabad kirtan* (musical recitation of hymns); meditate on *naam*; and serve humanity. Sikhs believe that being in the company of the *satsang* (association with *sat*, 'true', people) or *sadh sangat* is one of the key ways to achieve liberation from the cycles of reincarnation.^[63]

Power and Devotion (Miri and Piri)

Miri-Piri is a doctrine that has been practiced in Sikh religion since the seventeenth century. The doctrine of the "Mir" (social and political aspects of life) and the "Pir" (guides to spiritual aspect of life) was revealed by the first Guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, but propounded by the sixth Guru of Sikhism, Guru Hargobind, on June 12, 1606.^{[64][65]} After the martyrdom of his father, Guru Hargobind was elevated to the Guruship and fulfilled the prophecy that was given by the primal figure of Sikh, Baba Buddha, that the guru will possess spiritual and temporal power. Guru Hargobind introduced the two swords of Miri and Piri symbolizing both worldly (social and political) and spiritual authority.^{[66][64]} The two kirpan of Miri and Piri are tied together with a khanda in center, so the combination of both is considered supreme, Where action informed or arising out of the spiritual heart completes one's purpose and meaning in the world of action: spirituality.^{[67][64]}

Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru and the founder of Sikhism, was a Bhakti saint.^[68] He taught that the most important form of worship is *Bhakti* (devotion to Waheguru).^[69] Guru Arjan, in the *Sukhmani Sahib*, recommended the true religion is one of loving devotion to God.^{[70][71]} The *Guru Granth Sahib* includes suggestions on how a Sikh should perform constant *Bhakti*.^{[69][72][73]} Some scholars call Sikhism a Bhakti sect of Indian traditions,^{[74][75]} adding that it emphasises "*nirguni Bhakti*," i.e. loving devotion to a divine without qualities or physical form.^{[75]:1–3[76][77]} While Western scholarship generally places Sikhism as arising primarily within a Hindu Bhakti movement milieu while recognizing some Sufi Islamic influences,^{[78][79]:3,42–3} some Indian Sikh scholars disagree and state that Sikhism transcended the environment it emerged from. The basis of the latter analysis is that Bhakti traditions did not clearly disassociate from Vedic texts and their cosmologies and metaphysical worldview, while the Sikh tradition clearly did disassociate from the Vedic tradition.^[80]

Some Sikh sects outside the Punjab region of India, such as those found in Maharashtra and Bihar, practice *aarti* (the ceremonial use of lamps) during Bhakti observances in a Sikh gurdwara.^{[81][82]} But, most Sikh gurdwaras forbid *aarti* during their Bhakti practices.^{[79]:201}

While emphasizing Bhakti, the Sikh gurus also taught that the spiritual life and secular householder life are intertwined, and not separate. This logically follows from the panentheistic nature of Sikh philosophy.^[83] In Sikh worldview, the everyday world is part of the Infinite Reality, increased spiritual awareness leads to increased and vibrant participation in the everyday world.^[84] Guru Nanak described living an "active, creative, and practical life" of "truthfulness, fidelity, self-control and purity" as being higher than the metaphysical truth.^[85]

The 6th Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind, after Guru Arjan's martyrdom, faced with oppression by the Islamic Mughal Empire, affirmed the philosophy that the political/temporal (*Miri*) and spiritual (*Piri*) realms are mutually coexistent.^{[86][87]} According to the 9th Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur, the ideal Sikh should have both *Shakti* (power that resides in the temporal), and *Bhakti* (spiritual meditative qualities). This was developed into the concept of the "saint soldier" by the 10th Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh.^[87]

The concept of man as elaborated by Guru Nanak refines and negates the "monotheistic concept of self/God", and "monotheism becomes almost redundant in the movement and crossings of love."^[88] The goal of man, taught the Sikh gurus, is to end all dualities of "self and other, I and not-I", attain the "attendant balance of separation-fusion, self-other, action-inaction, attachment-detachment, in the course of daily life".^[88]

Singing and Music

Sikhs refer to the hymns of the gurus as *Gurbani* ('Guru's word'). Shabad Kirtan is the singing of Gurbani. The entire verses of Guru Granth Sahib are written in a form of poetry and rhyme to be recited in thirty-one Ragas of the Classical Indian Music as specified. However, the exponents of these are rarely to be found amongst the Sikhs who are conversant with all the Ragas in the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak started the Shabad Kirtan tradition and taught that listening to kirtan is a powerful way to achieve tranquility while meditating, and singing of the glories of the Supreme Timeless One (God) with devotion is the most effective way to come in communion with the Supreme Timeless One.^[89] The three morning prayers for Sikhs consist of Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, and Tav-Prasad Savaiye.^[90] Baptised Sikhs (Amritdharis) rise early and meditate, then recite all the Five Banis of Nitnem, before breakfast. Five Banis consists of Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tav-Prasad Savaiye, Chaupai Sahib, Anand Sahib and recitation of the banis paath is followed by Ardās in which Sarbat da Bhala principle is taught by Gurus which literally means blessings for everyone, blessings to humankind in good faith without discrimination.

Remembrance of the Divine Name

A key practice by Sikhs is remembrance^[51] of the *Naam* (divine name) Waheguru.^[50] This contemplation is done through *Nām Japna* (repetition of the divine name) or *Naam Simran* (remembrance of the divine Name through recitation).^{[51][91]} The verbal repetition of the name of God or a sacred syllable has been an ancient established practice in religious traditions in India, however, Sikhism developed *Naam-simran* as an important Bhakti practice.^{[92][93][94]} Guru Nanak's ideal is the total exposure of one's being to the divine Name and a total conforming to *Dharma* or the "Divine Order". Nanak described the result of the disciplined application of *nām simraṇ* as a "growing towards and into God" through a gradual process of five stages. The last of these is *Sach Khaṇḍ* (*The Realm of Truth*) – the final union of the spirit with God.^[53]

Service and Action

The Sikh gurus taught that by constantly remembering the divine name (*naam simran*) and through selfless service (*sēvā*) the devotee overcomes egotism (*Haumai*). This, it states, is the primary root of five evil impulses and the cycle of birth and death.^{[95][96]}

Service in Sikhism takes three forms: *Tan* (physical service, i.e. labor), *Man* (mental service, such as dedicating your heart for service of others), and *Dhan* (material service, including financial support).^[97] Sikhism stresses *kirat karō*: that is "honest work". Sikh teachings also stress the concept of sharing, or *vaṇḍ chakkō*, giving to the needy for the benefit of the community.^[98]

Justice and Equality

Sikhism regards God as the true king, the king of all kings, the one who dispenses justice through the law of *karma*, a retributive model and divine grace.^{[99][31][32]}

The term for justice in the Sikh tradition is *Niāyā* ^[99] It is related to the term *dharam* which in Sikhism connotes 'moral order' and righteousness (derived from but become distinct from the etymologically related Hindu concept of *dharma*).^[99] According to the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, states Pashaura Singh (a professor of Sikh studies), "one must first try all the peaceful means of negotiation in the pursuit of justice" and if these fail then it is legitimate to "draw the sword in defense of righteousness".^[100] Sikhism considers "an attack on dharam is an attack on justice, on righteousness, and on the moral order generally" and the dharam "must be defended at all costs".^[101] The divine name is its antidote for pain and vices. Forgiveness is taught as a virtue in Sikhism, yet it also teaches its faithful to shun those with evil intentions and to pick up the sword to fight injustice and religious persecution.^[102]

Sikhism does not differentiate religious obligations by sex. God in Sikhism has no sex, and the Sikh scripture does not discriminate against women, nor bar them from any roles.^[103] Women in Sikhism have been in positions of leadership, including leading in wars and issued orders or *hukamnamas*.^{[104][103][105]}

Ten Gurus and Authority

The term Guru comes from the Sanskrit *gurū*, meaning teacher, enlightener, guide, or mentor. The traditions and philosophy of Sikhism were established by ten Gurus from 1469 to 1708.^{[106][107]} Each Guru added to and reinforced the message taught by the previous, resulting in the creation of the Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was the first Guru and appointed a disciple as successor. Guru Gobind Singh was the final Guru in human form. Before his death, Guru Gobind Singh decreed in 1708, that the Gurū Granth Sāhib would be the final and perpetual Guru of the Sikhs.^[13]

Guru Nanak stated that his Guru is God who is the same from the beginning of time to the end of time.^[108] Nanak said to be a God's slave and servant, but maintained that he was only a guide and teacher.^{[109][110]} Nanak stated that the human Guru is mortal, who is to be respected and loved but not worshipped.^[109] When Guru, or SatGuru (The true Guru) is used in *Gurbani* it is often referring to the highest expression of truthfulness.^[111]

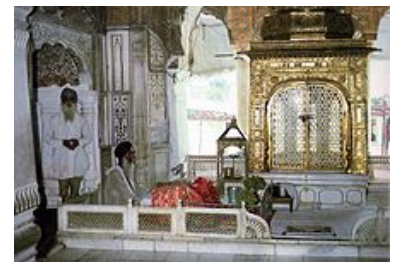
Guru Angad succeeded Guru Nanak. Later, an important phase in the development of Sikhism came with the third successor, Guru Amar Das. Guru Nanak's teachings emphasised the pursuit of salvation; Guru Amar Das began building a cohesive community of followers with initiatives such as sanctioning distinctive ceremonies for birth, marriage, and death. Amar Das also established the *manji* (comparable to a *diocese*) system of clerical supervision.^[53]

Guru Amar Das's successor and son-in-law Guru Ram Das founded the city of Amritsar, which is home of the Harimandir Sahib and regarded widely as the holiest city for all Sikhs. Guru Arjan was arrested by Mughal authorities who were suspicious and hostile to the religious community he was developing.^[112] His persecution and death inspired his successors to promote a military and political organization of Sikh communities to defend themselves against the attacks of Mughal forces.

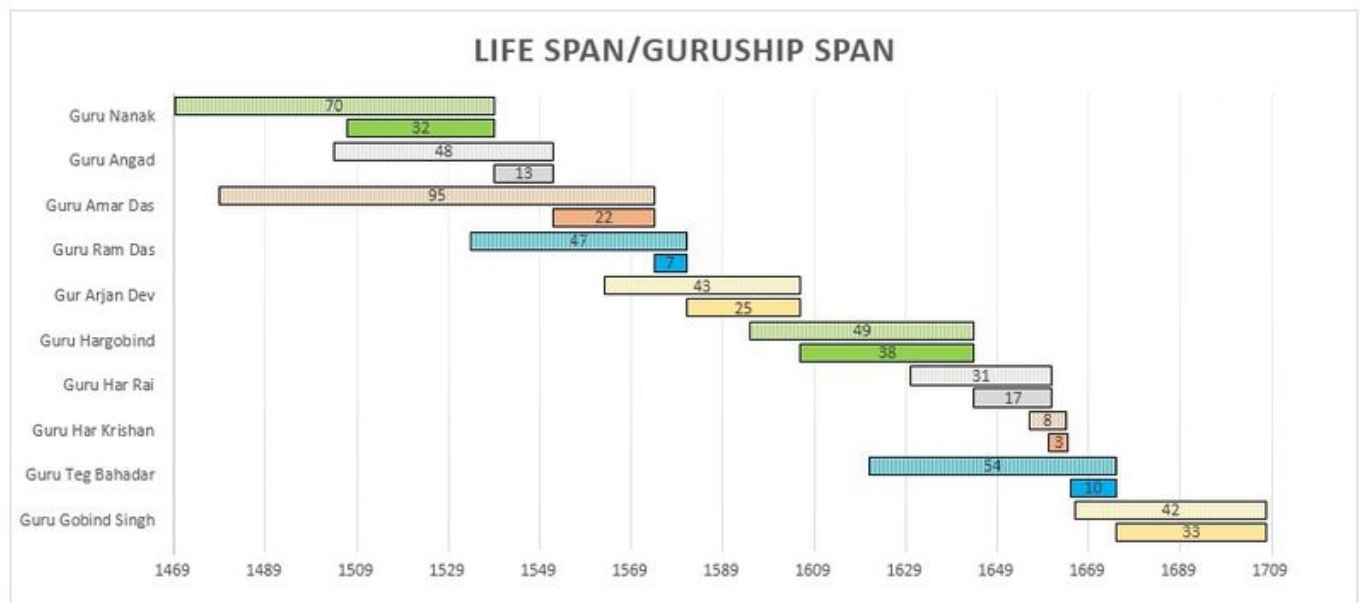
The Sikh gurus established a mechanism which allowed the Sikh religion to react as a community to changing circumstances. The sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, was responsible for the creation of the concept of Akal Takht (*throne of the timeless one*), which serves as the supreme decision-making centre of Sikhism and sits opposite the Harimandir Sahib. The Akal Takht is located in the city of Amritsar. The leader is appointed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Pabandhak Committee (SPGC). The *Sarbat Khālsā* (a representative portion of the Khalsa Panth) historically gathers at the Akal Takht on special festivals such as Vaisakhi or Hola Mohalla and when there is a need to discuss matters that affect the entire Sikh nation. A *gurmata* (literally, 'guru's intention') is an order passed by the Sarbat Khālsā in the presence of the Gurū Granth Sāhib. A *gurmata* may only be passed on a subject that affects the fundamental principles of Sikh religion; it is binding upon all Sikhs.^[113] The term *hukamnāmā* (literally, 'edict' or 'royal order') is often used interchangeably with the term *gurmata*. However, a *hukamnāmā* formally refers to a hymn from the *Gurū Granth Sāhib* which is given order to Sikhs.



A rare Tanjore-style painting from the late 19th century depicting the ten Sikh Gurus with Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana



The interior of the Akal Takht



Life Span		Guruship Span	
Guru Nanak	 15-Apr-1469 - 22-Sep-1539 : 70 years 05 months and 07 days	 20-Aug-1507 - 22-Sep-1539 : 32 years 01 months and 02 days	
Guru Angad	 31-Mar-1504 - 29-Mar-1552 : 47 years 11 months and 29 days	 07-Sep-1539 - 29-Mar-1552 : 12 years 06 months and 22 days	
Guru Amar Das	 05-May-1479 - 01-Sep-1574 : 95 years 03 months and 27 days	 26-Mar-1552 - 01-Sep-1574 : 22 years 05 months and 06 days	
Guru Ram Das	 24-Sep-1534 - 01-Sep-1581 : 46 years 11 months and 08 days	 01-Sep-1574 - 01-Sep-1581 : 07 years	
Gur Arjan Dev	 02-May-1563 - 16-Jun1606 : 43 years 01 months and 14 days	 01-Sep-1581 - 30-May-1606 : 24 years 08 months and 29 days	
Guru Hargobind	 05-Jul-1595 - 19-Mar-1644 : 48 years 08 months and 14 days	 25-May-1606 - 28-Feb-1644 : 37 years 09 months and 03 days	
Guru Har Rai	 16-Jan-1630 - 06-Oct-1661 : 31 years 08 months and 20 days	 03-Mar-1644 - 06-Oct-1661 : 17 years 07 months and 03 days	
Guru Har Krishan	 23-Jul-1656 - 30-Mar-1664 : 07 years 08 months and 07 days	 06-Oct-1661 - 30-Mar-1664 : 02 years 05 months and 24 days	
Guru Teg Bahadar	 01-Apr-1621 - 24-Nov-1675 : 54 years 07 months and 23 days	 20-Mar-1665 - 11-Nov-1675 : 10 years 07 months and 22 days	
Guru Gobind Singh	 22-Dec-1666 - 07-Oct-1708 : 41 years 09 months and 15 days	 11-Nov-1675 - 07-Oct-1708 : 32 years 10 months and 26 days	

Approximate Life Spans and Guruship Spans of the 10 Sikh Gurus

The word *guru* in Sikhism also refers to *Akal Purkh* (God), and God and *guru* can sometimes be synonymous in *Gurbani* (Sikh writings).^{[106][114]}

Scripture

There is one primary scripture for the Sikhs: the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*. It is sometimes synonymously referred to as the *Ādi Granth*.^[115] Chronologically, however, the *Ādi Granth* – literally, 'First Volume' – refers to the version of the scripture created by *Guru Arjan* in 1604.^[116] The *Gurū Granth Sāhib* is the final expanded version of the scripture compiled by *Guru Gobind Singh*.^{[115][117]} While the *Guru Granth Sahib* is an unquestioned scripture in Sikhism, another important religious text, the *Dasam Granth*, does not enjoy universal consensus, but is considered a secondary scripture by many Sikhs.^[115]

Ādi Granth

The *Ādi Granth* was compiled primarily by *Bhai Gurdas* under the supervision of *Guru Arjan* between the years 1603 and 1604.^[118] It is written in the Gurmukhī script, which is a descendant of the *Laṇḍā* script used in the Punjab at that time.^[119] The Gurmukhī script was standardised by *Guru Angad*, the second guru of the Sikhs, for use in the Sikh scriptures and is thought to have been influenced by the *Śāradā* and *Devanāgarī* scripts. An authoritative scripture was created to protect the integrity of hymns and teachings of the Sikh Gurus, and thirteen Hindu and two Muslim bhagats of the *Bhakti* movement sant tradition in medieval India.^[120] The thirteen Hindu *bhagats* whose teachings were entered into the text included *Ramananda*, *Namdev*, *Pipa*, *Ravidas*, *Beni*, *Bhikhan*, *Dhanna*, *Jaidev*, *Parmanand*, *Sadhana*, *Sain*, *Sur*, *Trilochan*, while the two Muslim *bhagats* were *Kabir* and Sufi saint *Farid*.^{[121][122][123][124]} However, the bhagats in context often spoke of transcending their religious labels, Kabir often attributed to being a Muslim states in the *Ādi Granth*, "I am not Hindu nor Muslim."^[125] The Gurus following on this message taught that different methods of devotion are for the same infinite God.^[126]

Guru Granth Sahib

The *Guru Granth Sahib* is the holy scripture of the Sikhs, and is regarded as the living Guru.

Compilation

The Guru Granth started as a volume of Guru Nanak's poetic compositions. Prior to his death, he passed on his volume to Guru Angad (Guru 1539–1551). The final version of the Gurū Granth Sāhib was compiled by Guru Gobind Singh in 1678. It consists of the original Ādi Granth with the addition of Guru Tegh Bahadur's hymns. The predominant bulk of Guru Granth Sahib is compositions by seven Sikh Gurus – Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. It also contains the traditions and teachings of thirteen Hindu Bhakti movement *sants* (saints) such as Ramananda, Namdev among others, and two Muslim saints namely Kabir and the Sufi Sheikh Farid.^{[121][53]}

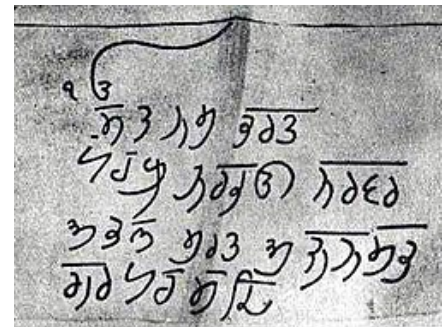


Gurū Granth Sāhib – the primary scripture of Sikhism

The text comprises 6,000 *śabads* (line compositions),^[115] which are poetically rendered and set to rhythmic ancient north Indian classical music.^[127] The bulk of the scripture is classified into sixty *rāgas*, with each Granth *rāga* subdivided according to length and author. The hymns in the scripture are arranged primarily by the *rāgas* in which they are read.^[115]

Language and script

The main language used in the scripture is known as *Sant Bhāṣā*, a language related to both Punjabi and Hindi and used extensively across medieval northern India by proponents of popular devotional religion (*bhakti*).^[128] The text is printed in Gurmukhi script, believed to have been developed by Guru Angad,^[115]. The language shares the Indo-European roots found in numerous regional languages of India.^[129]



Mul Mantra written by Guru Har Rai, showing the *Ik Onkar* at top.

Teachings



A group of Sikh musicians called Dhadi at the Golden Temple complex

The vision in the Guru Granth Sahib, states Torkel Brekke, is a society based on divine justice without oppression of any kind.^[130]

The Granth begins with the *Mūl Mantra*, an iconic verse which received Guru Nanak directly from Akal Purakh (God). The traditional Mul Mantra goes from *Ik Oankar* until Nanak Hosee Bhee Sach.

One God exists, truth by name, creative power, without fear, without enmity, timeless form, unborn, self-existent, by the Guru's grace.^[131]

(Punjabi: ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥,

romanized: *lka ōaṛīkāra satī nāmu karatā purakhu nirabha'u niravairu akāla mūrati ajūnī saibhaṇ gura prasādi*)

As guru

The Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji, named the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib as his successor, terminating the line of human Gurus and making the scripture the literal embodiment of the eternal, impersonal Guru, where Gods/Gurus word serves as the spiritual guide for Sikhs.^{[11][12][13][132]}

All Sikhs are commanded to take the Granth as Guru

(Punjabi: ਸੱਬ ਸਿੱਖਣ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ I, romanized: *Sabb sikkhaṇ kō hukam hai gurū mānyō granth*)

The Guru Granth Sahib is installed in Sikh *Gurdwara* (temple); many Sikhs bow or prostrate before it on entering the temple. The Guru Granth Sahib is installed every morning and put to bed at night in many *Gurdwaras*.^[133] The Granth is revered as eternal *gurbānī* and the spiritual authority.^[134]

The copies of the Guru Granth Sahib are not regarded as material objects, but as living subjects which are alive.^[135] According to Myrvold, the Sikh scripture is treated with respect like a living person, in a manner similar to the Gospel in early Christian worship. Old copies of the Sikh scripture are not thrown away, rather funeral services are performed.^[135]

In India the Guru Granth Sahib is even officially recognised by the Supreme Court of India as a judicial person which can receive donations and own land.^[135] Yet, some Sikhs also warn that, without true comprehension of the text, veneration for the text can lead to bibliolatry, with the concrete form of the teachings becoming the object of worship instead of the teachings themselves.^[135]

Relation to Hinduism and Islam

The Sikh scriptures use Hindu terminology, with references to the Vedas, and the names of gods and goddesses in Hindu bhakti movement traditions, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Parvati, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Rama, Krishna, but not to worship.^{[130][136][137]} It also refers to the spiritual concepts in Hinduism (*Ishvara*, *Bhagavan*, *Brahman*) and the concept of God in Islam (*Allah*) to assert that these are just "alternate names for the Almighty One".^[138]

While the Guru Granth Sahib acknowledges the Vedas, Puranas and Qur'an,^[139] it does not imply a syncretic bridge between Hinduism and Islam,^[140] but emphasises focusing on nitnem banis like Japu (repeating mantra of the divine Name of God – Waheguru), instead of Muslim practices such as circumcision or praying by prostrating on the ground to God, or Hindu rituals such as wearing thread.^[141]

Dasam Granth

The Dasam Granth is a scripture of Sikhs which contains texts attributed to the Guru Gobind Singh. The *Dasam Granth* is important to a great number of Sikhs, however it does not have the same authority as the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Some compositions of the *Dasam Granth* like Jaap Sahib, (Amrit Savaiye), and Benti Chaupai are part of the daily prayers (Nitnem) for Sikhs.^[143] The first verse of the ardās prayer is from Chandi di Var. The *Dasam Granth* is largely versions of Hindu mythology from the Puranas, secular stories from a variety of sources called *Charitro Pakhyān* – tales to protect careless men from perils of lust.^{[144][145]}

Five versions of *Dasam Granth* exist, and the authenticity of the *Dasam Granth* has in modern times become one of the most debated topics within Sikhism. The text played a significant role in Sikh history, but in modern times parts of the text have seen antipathy and discussion among Sikhs.^[142]

Janamsakhis

The Janamsākhīs (literally *birth stories*), are writings which profess to be biographies of Guru Nanak. Although not scripture in the strictest sense, they provide a hagiographic look at Guru Nanak's life and the early start of Sikhism. There are several – often contradictory and sometimes unreliable – Janamsākhīs and they are not held in the same regard as other sources of scriptural knowledge.

Observances

Observant Sikhs adhere to long-standing practices and traditions to strengthen and express their faith. The daily recitation of the divine name of God VaheGuru and from a memory of specific passages from the Gurū Granth Sāhib, like the *Japu* (or *Japjī*, literally *chant*) hymns is recommended immediately after rising and bathing. Baptized Sikhs recite the five-morning prayers, the evening and night prayer. Family customs include both reading passages from the scripture and attending the gurdwara (also *gurdwārā*, meaning *the doorway to God*; sometimes transliterated as *Gurudwara*). There are many gurdwaras prominently constructed and maintained across India, as well as in almost every nation where Sikhs reside. Gurdwaras are open to all, regardless of religion, background, caste, or race.

Worship in a gurdwara consists chiefly of the singing of passages from the scripture. Sikhs will commonly enter the gurdwara, touch the ground before the holy scripture with their foreheads. The recitation of the eighteenth century *ardās* is also customary for attending Sikhs. The *ardās* recalls past sufferings and glories of the community, invoking divine grace for all humanity.^[146]



The Dasam Granth is a Sikh scripture which contains texts attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, including his autobiography Bachittar Natak. The major narrative in the text is on Chaubis Avtar (24 Avatars of Hindu god Vishnu), Rudra, Brahma, the Hindu warrior goddess Chandi and a story of Rama in Bachittar Natak.^[142]



The Darbar Sahib of a Gurdwara

The gurdwara is also the location for the historic Sikh practice of "Langar" or the community meal. All gurdwaras are open to anyone of any faith for a free meal, always vegetarian.^[147] People eat together, and the kitchen is maintained and serviced by Sikh community volunteers.^[148]

Sikh festivals/events

Guru Amar Das chose festivals for celebration by Sikhs like Vaisakhi, wherein he asked Sikhs to assemble and share the festivities as a community.^{[149][150]}

Vaisakhi is one of the most important festivals of Sikhs, while other significant festivals commemorate the birth, lives of the Gurus and Sikh martyrs. Historically, these festivals have been based on the moon calendar Bikrami calendar.^[151] In 2003, the SGPC, the Sikh organisation in charge of upkeep of the historical gurdwaras of Punjab, adopted Nanakshahi calendar.^[151] The new calendar is highly controversial among Sikhs and is not universally accepted. Sikh festivals include the following:

- Vaisakhi which includes Parades and Nagar Kirtan and occurs on 13 April or 14 April. Sikhs celebrate it because on this day, which fell on 30 March 1699, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, inaugurated the Khalsa, the 11th body of Guru Granth Sahib and leader of Sikhs until eternity.
 - Nagar Kirtan involves the processional singing of holy hymns throughout a community. While practiced at any time, it is customary in the month of Vaisakhi (or Vaisakhi). Traditionally, the procession is led by the saffron-robed Panj Piare (the five beloved of the Guru), who are followed by the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture, which is placed on a float.



Nagar Kirtan crowd listening to Kirtan at Yuba City, California.

- Band Chor Diwas has been another important Sikh festival in its history.^[152] In recent years, instead of Diwali, the post-2003 calendar released by SGPC has named it the Bandi Chhor divas.^[153] Sikhs celebrate Guru Hargobind's release from the Gwalior Fort, with several innocent Raja kings who were also imprisoned by Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1619. This day continues to be commemorated on the same day of Hindu festival of Diwali, with lights, fireworks and festivities.
- Hola Mohalla is a tradition started by Guru Gobind Singh. It starts the day after Sikhs celebrate Holi.^[154] sometimes referred to as Hola.^[155] Guru Gobind Singh modified Holi with a three-day Hola Mohalla extension festival of martial arts. The extension started the day after the Holi festival in Anandpur Sahib, where Sikh soldiers would train in mock battles, compete in horsemanship, athletics, archery and military exercises.^{[156][157]}
- Gurpurbs are celebrations or commemorations based on the lives of the Sikh Gurus. They tend to be either birthdays or celebrations of Sikh martyrdom. All ten Gurus have Gurpurbs on the Nanakshahi calendar, but it is Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh who have a gurpurb that is widely celebrated in Gurdwaras and Sikh homes. The martyrdoms are also known as a Shaheedi Gurpurbs, which mark the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Ceremonies and customs

Khalsa Sikhs have also supported and helped develop major pilgrimage traditions to sacred sites such as Harmandir Sahib, Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Patna Sahib, Hazur Nanded Sahib, Hemkund Sahib and others.^[158] Sikh pilgrims and Sikhs of other sects customarily consider these as holy and a part of their Tirath.^[159] The Hola Mohalla around the festival of Holi, for example, is a ceremonial and customary gathering every year in Anandpur Sahib attracting over 100,000 Sikhs.^{[160][161]} Major Sikh temples feature a sarovar where some Sikhs take a customary dip. Some take home the sacred

water of the tank particularly for sick friends and relatives,^{[162][163]} believing that the waters of such sacred sites have restorative powers and the ability to purify one's *karma*.^{[164][vi][162]} The various Gurus of Sikhism have had different approaches to pilgrimage.^[165]

Upon a child's birth, the Guru Granth Sahib is opened at a random point and the child is named using the first letter on the top left hand corner of the left page. All boys are given the last name Singh, and all girls are given the last name Kaur (this was once a title which was conferred on an individual upon joining the Khalsa).^[166]

The Sikh marriage ritual includes the *anand kāraj* ceremony.^{[167][168]} The marriage ceremony is performed in front of the Guru Granth Sahib by a baptized Khalsa, Granthi of the Gurdwara.^{[169][170]} The tradition of circling the Guru Granth Sahib and Anand Karaj among Khalsa is practised since the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das. Its official recognition and adoption came in 1909, during the Singh Sabha Movement.^[170]

Upon death, the body of a Sikh is usually cremated. If this is not possible, any respectful means of disposing the body may be employed. The *kīrtan sōhilā* and *ardās* prayers are performed during the funeral ceremony (known as *antim sanskāra*).^[171]



Sikh wedding



Sikh funeral procession, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Initiation and the Khalsa

Khalsa (meaning "pure and sovereign") is the collective name given by Guru Gobind Singh to those Sikhs who have been fully initiated by taking part in a ceremony called *amrit sañcār* (nectar ceremony).^[172] During this ceremony, sweetened water is stirred with a double-edged sword while liturgical prayers are sung; it is offered to the initiating Sikh, who ritually drinks it.^[172] Many Sikhs are not formally and fully initiated, as they do not undergo this ceremony, but do adhere to some components of Sikhism and identify as Sikhs. The initiated Sikh, who is believed to be reborn, is referred to as Amritdhari or Khalsa Sikh, while those who are not initiated or baptised are referred to as Kesdhari or Sahajdhari Sikhs.^{[172][173]}

The first time that this ceremony took place was on Vaisakhi, which fell on 30 March 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab.^[172] It was on that occasion that Gobind Singh baptised the Pañj Piārē – the five beloved ones, who in turn baptised Guru Gobind Singh himself. To males who initiated, the last name Singh, meaning "lion", was given, while the last name Kaur, meaning "princess", was given to baptised Sikh females.^[172]

Baptised Sikhs wear five items, called the Five Ks (in Punjabi known as *pañj kakkē* or *pañj kakār*), at all times. The five items are: *kēs* (uncut hair), *kaṛghā* (small wooden comb), *kaṛā* (circular steel or iron bracelet), *kirpān* (sword/dagger), and *kacchera* (special undergarment).^[172] The Five Ks have both practical and symbolic purposes.^[174]

History

Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the founder of Sikhism, was born in the village of *Rāi Bhōi dī Talwandī*, now called Nankana Sahib (in present-day Pakistan).^[175] His parents were Punjabi Khatri Hindus.^{[176][177]} According to the hagiography *Puratan Janamsakhi* composed more than two centuries after his death and probably based on oral tradition,^[178] Nanak as a boy was fascinated by religion and spiritual matters, spending time with wandering ascetics and holy men.^[179] His friend was Mardana, a Muslim. Together they would sing devotional songs all night in front of the public, and bathe in the river in the morning. One day, at the usual bath, Nanak went missing and his family feared he had drowned. Three days later he returned home, and declared: "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim" ("*nā kōi hindū nā kōi musulmān*"). Thereafter, Nanak started preaching his ideas that form the tenets of Sikhism. In 1526, Guru Nanak at age 50, started a small commune in Kartarpur and his disciples came to be known as *Sikhs*.^[179] Although the exact account of his itinerary is disputed, hagiographic accounts state he made five major journeys, spanning thousands of miles: the first tour being east towards Bengal and Assam; the second south towards Andhra and Tamil Nadu; the third north to Kashmir, Ladakh, and Mount Sumeru^[180] in Tibet; and the fourth to Baghdad.^[181] In his last and final tour, he returned to the banks of the Ravi River to end his days.^[182]

There are two competing theories on Guru Nanak's teachings.^[183] One, according to Cole and Sambhi, is based on hagiographical *Janamsakhis*,^[184] and states that Nanak's teachings and Sikhism were a revelation from God, and not a social protest movement nor any attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam in the 15th century.^[185] The other states that Nanak was a guru. According to Singha, "Sikhism does not subscribe to the theory of incarnation or the concept of prophethood. But it has a pivotal concept of Guru. He is not an incarnation of God, not even a prophet. He is an illumined soul."^[186] The second

theory continues that hagiographical *Janamsakhis* were not written by Nanak, but by later followers without regard for historical accuracy, and contain numerous legends and myths created to show respect for Nanak.^[187] The term *revelation*, clarify Cole and Sambhi, in Sikhism is not limited to the teachings of Nanak, but is extended to all Sikh gurus, as well as the words of past, present and future men and women, who possess divine knowledge intuitively through meditation. The Sikh revelations include the words of non-Sikh *bhagats*, some who lived and died before the birth of Nanak, and whose teachings are part of the Sikh scriptures.^[188] The *Adi Granth* and successive Sikh gurus repeatedly emphasised, states Mandair, that Sikhism is "not about hearing voices from God, but it is about changing the nature of the human mind, and anyone can achieve direct experience and spiritual perfection at any time".^[183]

Historical influences

The roots of the Sikh tradition are, states Louis Fenech, perhaps in the *Sant*-tradition of India whose ideology grew to become the Bhakti tradition.^[vii] Furthermore, adds Fenech:^[189]

Few Sikhs would mention these Indic texts and ideologies in the same breadth as the Sikh tradition, let alone trace elements of their tradition to this chronological and ideological point, *despite the fact* that the Indic mythology permeates the Sikh sacred canon, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the secondary canon, the *Dasam Granth* ... and adds delicate nuance and substance to the sacred symbolic universe of the Sikhs of today and of their past ancestors.

The development of Sikhism was influenced by the *Bhakti movement*;^{[viii][vii][ix][190]} however, Sikhism was not simply an extension of the Bhakti movement.^{[80][191]} Sikhism, for instance, disagreed with some of the views of Bhakti saints Kabir and Ravidas.^{[x][191]} Sikhism developed while the region was being ruled by the *Mughal Empire*. Two of the Sikh Gurus, *Guru Arjan* and *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, refused to convert to Islam and were tortured and executed by the Mughal rulers.^{[25][192]} The Islamic era persecution of Sikhs triggered the founding of the *Khalsa*, as an order for freedom of conscience and religion.^{[25][193][30]} A Sikh is expected to embody the qualities of a "*Sant-Sipāhī*" – a *saint-soldier*.^{[31][32]}

Growth of Sikhism

After its inception, Sikhism grew as it gained converts among Hindus and Muslims in the Punjab region.^{[24][194][195][196]} In 1539, *Guru Nanak* chose his disciple *Lahiṇā* as a successor to the Guruship rather than either of his sons. *Lahiṇā* was named *Guru Angad* and became the second Guru of the Sikhs.^{[197][198]} Nanak conferred his choice at the town of *Kartarpur* on the banks of the river *Ravi*. *Sri Chand*, *Guru Nanak's* son was also a religious man, and continued his own commune of Sikhs. His followers came to be known as the *Udasi* Sikhs, the first parallel sect of Sikhism that formed in Sikh history.^[199] The *Udasis* believe that the Guruship should have gone to *Sri Chand*, since he was a man of pious habits in addition to being *Nanak's* son.^[199]

Guru Angad, before joining *Guru Nanak's* commune, worked as a *pujari* (priest) and religious teacher centered around Hindu goddess *Durga*.^{[198][200]} On *Nanak's* advice, *Guru Angad* moved from *Kartarpur* to *Khadur*, where his wife *Khivi* and children were living, until he was able to bridge the divide between his followers and the *Udasis*. *Guru Angad* continued the work started by *Guru Nanak* and is widely credited for standardising the *Gurmukhī script* as used in the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.^[200]

Guru Amar Das became the third Sikh Guru in 1552 at the age of 73. He adhered to the *Vaishnavism* tradition of Hinduism for much of his life, before joining the commune of *Guru Angad*.^{[201][202]} *Goindval* became an important centre for Sikhism during the Guruship of *Guru Amar Das*. He was a reformer, and discouraged veiling of women's faces (a Muslim custom) as well as *sati* (a Hindu custom).^{[203][204]} He encouraged the *Kshatriya* people to fight in order to protect people and for the sake of justice, stating this is *Dharma*.^[205] *Guru Amar Das* started the tradition of appointing *manji* (zones of religious administration with an appointed chief called *sangatias*),^[201] introduced the *dasvandh* ("the tenth" of income) system of revenue collection in the name of *Guru* and as pooled community religious resource,^[206] and the famed *langar* tradition of Sikhism where anyone, without discrimination of any kind, could get a free meal in a communal seating. The collection of revenue from Sikhs through regional appointees helped Sikhism grow.^{[201][207]}



Guru Nanak explaining Sikh teachings to *Sadhus*

Guru Amar Das named his disciple and son-in-law Jēṭhā as the next Guru, who came to be known as Guru Ram Das. The new Guru faced hostilities from the sons of Guru Amar Das and therefore shifted his official base to lands identified by Guru Amar Das as Guru-ka-Chak.^[208] He moved his commune of Sikhs there and the place then was called Ramdaspur, after him. This city grew and later became Amritsar – the holiest city of Sikhism.^[209] Guru Ram Das expanded the *manji* organization for clerical appointments in Sikh temples, and for revenue collections to theologically and economically support the Sikh movement.^[208]

In 1581, Guru Arjan – youngest son of Guru Ram Das, became the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. The choice of successor, as throughout most of the history of Sikh Guru successions, led to disputes and internal divisions among the Sikhs.^[210] The elder son of Guru Ram Das named Prithi Chand is remembered in the Sikh tradition as vehemently opposing Guru Arjan, creating a faction Sikh community which the Sikhs following Guru Arjan called as *Minas* (literally, "scoundrels").^{[211][212]}

Guru Arjan is remembered in the Sikh for many things. He built the first Harimandir Sahib (later to become the Golden Temple). He was a poet and created the first edition of Sikh sacred text known as the Ādi Granth (literally "the first book") and included the writings of the first five Gurus and other enlightened 13 Hindu and 2 Muslim Sufi saints. In 1606, he was tortured and killed by the Mughal emperor Jahangir,^[213] for refusing to convert to Islam.^{[214][25][215]} His martyrdom is considered a watershed event in the history of Sikhism.^{[25][216]}

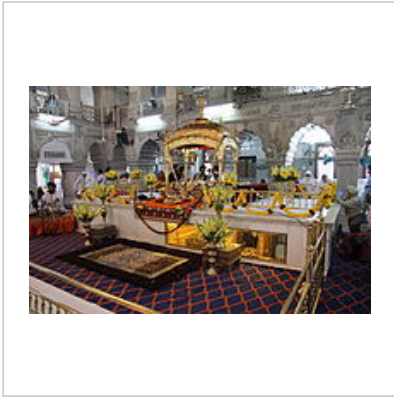
Political advancement

After the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, his son Guru Hargobind at age eleven became the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, and Sikhism dramatically evolved to become a political movement in addition to being religious.^[217] Guru Hargobind carried two swords, calling one spiritual and the other for temporal purpose (known as *mīrī* and *pīrī* in Sikhism).^[218] According to the Sikh tradition, Guru Arjan asked his son Hargobind to start a military tradition to protect the Sikh people and always keep himself surrounded by armed Sikhs. The building of an armed Sikh militia began with Guru Hargobind.^[217] Guru Hargobind was soon arrested by the Mughals and kept in jail in Gwalior. It is unclear how many years he served in prison, with different texts stating it to be between 2 and 12.^[219] He married three women, built a fort to defend Ramdaspur and created a formal court called Akal Takht, now the highest Khalsa Sikh religious authority.^[220]

In 1644, Guru Hargobind named his grandson Har Rai as the Guru. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan attempted political means to undermine the Sikh tradition, by dividing and influencing the succession.^[221] The Mughal ruler gave land grants to Dhir Mal, a grandson of Guru Hargobind living in Kartarpur, and attempted to encourage Sikhs to recognise Dhir Mal as the rightful successor to Guru Hargobind.^[221] Dhir Mal issued statements in favour of the Mughal state, and critical of his grandfather Guru Arjan. Guru Hargobind rejected Dhir Mal, the latter refused to give up the original version of the Adi Granth he had, and the Sikh community was divided.^[221]

Guru Har Rai is famed to have met Dara Shikoh during a time Dara Shikoh and his younger brother Aurangzeb were in a bitter succession fight. Aurangzeb summoned Guru Har Rai, who refused to go and sent his elder son Ram Rai instead.^[222] The emperor found a verse in the Sikh scripture insulting to Muslims, and Ram Rai agreed it was a mistake then changed it. Ram Rai thus pleased Aurangzeb, but displeased Guru Har Rai who excommunicated his elder son. He nominated his younger son Guru Har Krishan to succeed him in 1661. Aurangzeb responded by granting Ram Rai a jagir (land grant). Ram Rai founded a town there and enjoyed Aurangzeb's patronage; the town came to be known as Dehradun, after *Dehra* referring to Ram Rai's shrine. Sikhs who followed Ram Rai came to be known as Ramraiya Sikhs.^{[222][223]} However, according to rough estimates, there are around 120–150 million (12–15 crore)^[224] Guru Har Krishan became the eighth Guru at the age of five, and died of smallpox before reaching the age of eight. No hymns composed by these three Gurus are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.^[225]

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the uncle of Guru Har Krishan, became Guru in 1665. Tegh Bahadur resisted the forced conversions of Kashmiri Pandits^[226] and non-Muslims^[227] to Islam, and was publicly beheaded in 1675 on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi for refusing to convert to Islam.^{[228][229]} His beheading traumatized the Sikhs. His body was cremated in Delhi, the head was carried secretly by Sikhs and cremated in Anandpur. He was succeeded by his son, Gobind Rai, who militarised his followers by creating the Khalsa in 1699, and baptising the *Pañj Piārē*.^[230] From then on, he was known as Guru Gobind Singh, and Sikh identity was redefined into a political force resisting religious persecution.^[231]



Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Delhi. The long window under the marble platform is the location where Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed by the Mughals.



Artistic rendering of the execution of Bhai Mati Das by the Mughals. This image is from a Sikh Ajaibghar near the towns of Mohali and Sirhind in Punjab, India.

Sikh confederacy and the rise of the Khalsa



Sculpture at Mehdianna Sahib of the execution of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716 by the Mughals.



Some bodyguards of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the Sikh capital, Lahore, Punjab.

Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa (the collective body of all initiated Sikhs) as the Sikh temporal authority in the year 1699. It created a community that combines its spiritual purpose and goals with political and military duties.^{[232][13][128]} Shortly before his death, Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed the Gurū Granth Sāhib (the Sikh Holy Scripture) to be the ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs.^[233]

The Sikh Khalsa's rise to power began in the 17th century during a time of growing militancy against Mughal rule. The creation of a Sikh Empire began when Guru Gobind Singh sent a Sikh general, Banda Singh Bahadur, to fight the Mughal rulers of India^[234] and those who had committed atrocities against Pir Buddhu Shah. Banda Singh advanced his army towards the main Muslim Mughal city of Sirhind and, following the instructions of the Guru, punished all the culprits. Soon after the invasion of Sirhind, while resting in his chamber after the Rehras prayer Guru Gobind Singh was stabbed by a Pathan assassin hired by Mughals. Gobind Singh killed the attacker with his sword. Though a European surgeon stitched the Guru's wound, the wound re-opened as the Guru tugged at a hard strong bow after a few days, causing profuse bleeding that led to Gobind Singh's death.

After the Guru's death, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur became the commander-in-chief of the Khalsa.^[235] He organised the civilian rebellion and abolished or halted the Zamindari system in time he was active and gave the farmers proprietorship of their own land.^[236] Banda Singh was executed by the emperor Farrukh Siyar after refusing the offer of a pardon if he

converted to Islam. The confederacy of Sikh warrior bands known as *misls* emerged, but these fought between themselves. Ranjit Singh achieved a series of military victories and created a Sikh Empire in 1799.

The Sikh empire had its capital in Lahore, spread over almost 200,000 square miles (520,000 square kilometres) comprising what is now northwestern Indian subcontinent. The Sikh Empire entered into a treaty with the colonial British powers, with each side recognizing Sutlej River as the line of control and agreeing not to invade the other side.^[237] Ranjit Singh's most lasting legacy was the restoration and expansion of the Harmandir Sahib, most revered Gurudwara of the Sikhs, with marble and gold, from which the popular name of the "Golden Temple" is derived.^[238] After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh Empire fell into disorder. Ranjit Singh had failed to establish a lasting structure for Sikh government or stable succession, and the Sikh Empire rapidly declined after his death. Factions divided the Sikhs, and led to Anglo-Sikh wars. The British easily defeated the confused and demoralised Khalsa forces, then disbanded them into destitution.^[239] The youngest son of Ranjit Singh, named Duleep Singh, ultimately succeeded, but he was arrested and exiled after the defeat of Sikh Khalsa.^[240]

Singh Sabha movement

The Singh Sabha movement, a movement to revitalize Sikhism, also saw the resurgence of the Khalsa after their defeat in wars with the British^[241] - latterly in the Second Anglo-Sikh War - and the subsequent decline and corruption of Sikh institutions during colonial rule, and the proselytization of other faith groups in the Punjab.^{[242][243]} It was started in the 1870s, and after a period of interfactional rivalry, united under the Tat Khalsa to reinvigorate Sikh practice and institutions.^[244]

The last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, Duleep Singh, converted to Christianity in 1853, a controversial but influential event in Sikh history. Along with his conversion, and after Sikh Empire had been dissolved and the region made a part of the colonial British Empire, proselytising activities of Christians, Brahmo Samajis, Arya Samaj, Muslim Anjuman-i-Islamia and Ahmadiyah sought to convert the Sikhs in northwestern Indian subcontinent into their respective faiths.^{[242][243]} These developments launched the Singh Sabha Movement.^{[242][243]}

The first meeting of the movement was in the Golden Temple, Amritsar in 1873, and it was largely launched by the Sanatan Sikhs, Gianis, priests, and granthis.^[245] Shortly thereafter, Nihang Sikhs began influencing the movement, followed by a sustained campaign by the Tat Khalsa, which had quickly gained dominance by the early 1880s.^{[244][246]} The movement became a struggle between Sanatan Sikhs and Tat Khalsa in defining and interpreting Sikhism.^{[247][248][249]}

Sanatan Sikhs led by Khem Singh Bedi – who claimed to be a direct descendant of Guru Nanak, Avtar Singh Vahiria and others supported a more inclusive approach which considered Sikhism as a reformed tradition of Hinduism, while Tat Khalsa campaigned for an exclusive approach to the Sikh identity, disagreeing with Sanatan Sikhs and seeking to modernize Sikhism.^{[249][246][250]} The Sikh Sabha movement expanded in north and northwest Indian subcontinent, leading to more than 100 Singh Sabhas.^{[249][247]} By the early decades of the 20th century, the influence of Tat Khalsa increased in interpreting the nature of Sikhism and their control over the Sikh Gurdwaras.^{[249][247][246]} The Tat Khalsa banished Brahmanical practices including the use of the *yagna* fire,^{[251][252]} replaced by the Anand Karaj marriage ceremony in accordance with Sikh scripture, and the idols and the images of Sikh Gurus from the Golden Temple in 1905, traditions which had taken root during the administration of the *mahants* during the 1800s.^[253] They undertook a sustained campaign to standardize how Sikh Gurdwaras looked and ran, while looking to Sikh scriptures and the early Sikh tradition^[254] to purify the Sikh identity.^[255]

The spiritual successors of the Singh Sabha include the Akali movement of the 1920s, as well as the modern-day Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a gurdwara administration body, and the Akali Dal political party.^[256]

Partition of India

Sikhs participated and contributed to the decades-long Indian independence movement from the colonial rule in the first half of the 20th century. Ultimately when the British Empire recognized independent India, the land was partitioned into Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan (East and West) in 1947. This event, states Banga, was a watershed event in Sikh history.^{[257][258]} The Sikhs had historically lived in northwestern region of Indian subcontinent on both sides of the partition line ("Radcliffe Line"). According to Banga and other scholars, the Sikhs had strongly opposed the Muslim League demands and saw it as "perpetuation of Muslim domination" and anti-Sikh policies in what just a hundred years before was a part of the Sikh Empire. As such, Sikh organizations, including the Chief Khalsa Dewan and Shiromani Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh, condemned the Lahore Resolution and the movement to create Pakistan, viewing it as inviting possible persecution; the Sikhs largely thus strongly opposed the partition of India.^[259] During the discussions with the colonial authorities, Tara Singh emerged as an important leader who campaigned to prevent the partition of colonial India and for the recognition of Sikhs as the third community.^[257]

When partition was announced, the newly created line divided the Sikh population into two halves. Along with the Hindus, the Sikhs suffered organized violence and riots against them in West Pakistan, and Sikhs moved en masse to the Indian side leaving behind their property and the sacred places of Sikhism.^[260] These reprisals on Sikhs were not one sided, because as Sikhs entered the Indian side, the Muslims in East Punjab experienced reprisals and they moved to West Pakistan.^{[257][261]} Before the partition, Sikhs constituted about 15% of the population in West Punjab that became a part of Pakistan, the majority being Muslims (55%). The Sikhs were the economic elite and wealthiest in West Punjab, with them having the largest representation in West Punjab's aristocracy, nearly 700 Gurdwaras and 400 educational institutions that served the interests of the Sikhs.^[262] Prior to the partition, there were a series of disputes between the majority Muslims and minority Sikhs, such as on the matters of jhatka versus halal meat, the disputed ownership of Gurdwara Sahidganj in Lahore which Muslims sought as a mosque and Sikhs as a Gurdwara, and the insistence of the provincial Muslim government in switching from Indian Gurmukhi script to Arabic-Persian Nastaliq script in schools.^[257] During and after the Simla Conference in June 1945, headed by Lord Wavell, the Sikh leaders initially expressed their desire to be recognized as the third party, but ultimately relegated their demands and sought a United India where Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims would live together, under a Swiss style constitution. The Muslim League rejected this approach, demanding that entire Punjab should be granted to Pakistan.^[263] The Sikh leaders then sought the partition instead, and Congress Working Committee passed a resolution in support of partitioning Punjab and Bengal.^{[263][261]}

Between March and August 1947, a series of riots, arson, plunder of Sikh and property, assassination of Sikh leaders, and killings in Jhelum districts, Rawalpindi, Attock and other places made Tara Singh call the situation in Punjab as "civil war", while Lord Mountbatten stated "civil war preparations were going on".^[260] The riots had triggered the early waves of migration in April, with some 20,000 people leaving northwest Punjab and moving to Patiala.^{[264][258]} In Rawalpindi, 40,000 people became homeless. The Sikh leaders made desperate petitions, but all religious communities were suffering in the political turmoil. Sikhs, states Banga, were "only 4 million out of a total of 28 million in Punjab, and 6 million out of nearly 400 million in India; they did not constitute the majority, not even in a single district".^{[264][265]}

When the partition line was formally announced in August 1947, the violence was unprecedented, with Sikhs being one of the most affected religious community both in terms of deaths, as well as property loss, injury, trauma and disruption.^{[266][261]} Sikhs and Muslims were both victims and perpetrators of retaliatory violence against each other. Estimates range between 200,000 and 2 million deaths of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims.^{[266][261]} There were numerous rapes of and mass suicides by Sikh women, they being taken captives, their rescues and above all a mass exodus of Sikhs from newly created Pakistan into newly independent India. The partition created the "largest foot convoy of refugees recorded in [human] history, stretching over 100 kilometer long", states Banga, with nearly 300,000 people consisting of mostly "distracted, suffering, injured and angry Sikhs". Sikh and Hindu refugees from Pakistan flooded into India, Muslim refugees from India flooded into Pakistan, each into their new homeland.^{[266][265]}

Khalistan

In 1940, a few Sikhs such as the victims of Komagata Maru in Canada proposed the idea of Khalistan as a buffer state between an independent India and what would become Pakistan.^[262] These leaders, however, were largely ignored.^{[257][258]} The early 1980s witnessed some Sikh groups seeking an independent nation named Khalistan carved out from India and Pakistan. The Golden Temple and Akal Takht were occupied by various militant groups in 1982. These included the Dharam Yudh Morcha led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the Babbar Khalsa, the AISSF and the National Council of Khalistan.^[267] Between 1982 and 1983, there were Anandpur Resolution demand-related terrorist attacks against civilians in parts of India.^[268] By late 1983, the Bhindranwale led group had begun to build bunkers and observation posts in and around the Golden Temple, with militants involved in weapons training.^[267] In June 1984, the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi ordered Indian Army to begin Operation Blue Star against the militants.^[267] The fierce engagement took place in the precincts of Darbar Sahib and resulted in many deaths, including Bhindranwale, the destruction of the Sikh Reference Library, which was considered a national treasure that contained over a thousand rare manuscripts,^[269] and destroyed Akal Takht. Numerous soldiers, civilians and militants died in the cross fire. Within days of the Operation Bluestar, some 2,000 Sikh soldiers in India mutinied and attempted to reach Amritsar to liberate the Golden Temple.^[267] Within six months, on 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi's Sikh bodyguards Satwant and Beant Singh assassinated her. The assassination triggered the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.^[268]



Sikh Light Infantry personnel march past during the Republic day parade in New Delhi, India



Sikhs in London protesting against the Indian government

According to Donald Horowitz, while anti-Sikh riots led to much damage and deaths, many serious provocations by militants also failed to trigger ethnic violence in many cases throughout the 1980s. The Sikhs and their neighbors, for most part, ignored attempts to provoke riots and communal strife.^[268]

Sikh people

Estimates state that Sikhism has some 25-30 million followers worldwide.^[271] According to Pew Research, a religion demographics and research group in Washington DC, "more than nine-in-ten Sikhs are in India, but there are also sizable Sikh communities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada."^[272] Within India, the Sikh population is found in every state and union territory, but it is predominantly found in the northwestern and northern states. Only in the state of Punjab do Sikhs constitute a majority (58% of the total, per 2011 census).^[270] The states and union territories of India where Sikhs constitute more than 1.5% of its population are Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir.^[270] Forming 4.7% of the total population, the western Canadian province of British Columbia is home to over 200,000 Sikhs and is the only province (or similar major subnational division) in the world outside India with Sikhism as the second most followed religion among the population.^{[273][274]}

Sikhs in India^[270]

State/UT	Percentage
Punjab	58%
Chandigarh	13.1%
Haryana	4.9%
Delhi	3.4%
Uttarakhand	2.3%
Jammu and Kashmir	1.9%
Rajasthan	1.3%
Himachal Pradesh	1.2%

Sikhism was founded in northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent in what is now Pakistan. Some of the Gurus were born near Lahore and in other parts of Pakistan. Prior to 1947, in British India, millions of Sikhs lived in what later became Pakistan. During the partition, Sikhs and Hindus left the newly created Muslim-majority Pakistan and mostly moved to Hindu-majority India — with some moving to Muslim-majority Afghanistan^[275] — while numerous Muslims in India moved to Pakistan.^{[276][277]} According to 2017 news reports, only about 20,000 Sikhs remain in Pakistan, and their population is dwindling (0.01% of the country's estimated 200 million population).^{[278][279]}

Sikh sects

Sikh sects are sub-traditions within Sikhism that believe in an alternate lineage of gurus, or have a different interpretation of the Sikh scriptures, or believe in following a living guru, or hold other concepts that differ from the orthodox Khalsa Sikhs.^{[280][281]} The major historic sects of Sikhism have included Udasi, Nirmala, Nanakpanthi, Khalsa, Sahajdhari, Namdhari Kuka, Nirankari, and Sarvaria.^[282]



Namdhari Sikhs, also called the *Kuka* Sikhs are a sect of Sikhism known for their crisp white dress and horizontal *pagari* (turban).^{[283][169]}

Above: Namdhari singer and musicians.

The early Sikh sects were Udasis and Minas founded by Sri Chand – the elder son of Guru Nanak, and Prithi Chand – the elder son of Guru Ram Das respectively, in parallel to the official succession of the Sikh Gurus. Later on Ramraiya sect grew in Dehradun with the patronage of Aurangzeb.^[284] Many splintered Sikh communities formed during the Mughal Empire era. Some of these sects were financially and administratively supported by the Mughal rulers in the hopes of gaining a more favorable and compliant citizenry.^{[281][284]}

After the collapse of Mughal Empire, and particularly during the rule of Ranjit Singh, Udasi Sikhs protected Sikh shrines, preserved the Sikh scripture and rebuilt those that were desecrated or destroyed during the Muslim–Sikh wars. However, Udasi Sikhs kept idols and images inside these Sikh temples.^{[199][285]} In the 19th century, Namdharis and Nirankaris sects were formed in Sikhism, seeking to reform and return to what each believed was the pure form of Sikhism.^{[249][247][248]}

All these sects differ from Khalsa orthodox Sikhs in their beliefs and practices, such as continuing to solemnize their weddings around fire and being strictly vegetarian.^{[283][169]} Many accept the concept of living Gurus such as Guru Baba Dyal Singh. The Nirankari sect, though unorthodox, was influential in shaping the views of Tat Khalsa and the contemporary-era Sikh beliefs and practices.^{[286][287]} Another significant Sikh sect of the 19th century was the Radhasoami movement in Punjab led by Baba Shiv Dyal.^[288] Other contemporary era Sikhs sects include the quasi Hindu 3HO, formed in 1971, which exists outside India, particularly in North America and Europe.^{[288][289][290]}

Sikh castes

According to Surinder Jodhka, the state of Punjab with a Sikh majority has the "largest proportion of scheduled caste population in India". Although decried by Sikhism, Sikhs have practiced a caste system. The system, along with untouchability, has been more common in rural parts of Punjab. The landowning dominant Sikh castes, states Jodhka, "have not shed all their prejudices against the lower castes or dalits; while dalits would be allowed entry into the village gurdwaras they would not be permitted to cook or serve langar." The Sikh dalits of Punjab have tried to build their own gurdwara, other local level institutions and sought better material circumstances and dignity. According to Jodhka, due to economic mobility in contemporary Punjab, castes no longer mean an inherited occupation, nor are work relations tied to a single location.^[291] In 1953, the government of India acceded to the demands of the Sikh leader, Master Tara Singh, to include Sikh Dalit castes in the list of scheduled castes.^[292] In the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 20 of the 140 seats are reserved for low-caste Sikhs.^[292]



Nagar Kirtan in Bangalore

Over 60% of Sikhs belong to the Jat caste, which is an agrarian caste. Despite being very small in numbers, the mercantile Khatri and Arora castes wield considerable influence within the Sikh community. Other common Sikh castes include Sainis, Ramgarhias (artisans), Ahluwalias (formerly brewers), Rai sikh (Raa), Kambojs (rural caste), Labanas, Kumhars and the two Dalit castes, known in Sikh terminology as the Mazhabis (the Chuhra) and the Ravidasias (the Chamars).^[293]

Sikh diaspora

Sikhism is the fourth-largest amongst the medium-sized world religions, and one of the youngest.^{[294][295][296]} Worldwide, there are 30 million Sikhs, which makes up 0.4% of the world's population. Approximately 75% of Sikhs live in Punjab, where they constitute over 58% of the state's population. Large communities of Sikhs migrate to the neighboring states such as Indian State of Haryana which is home to the second largest Sikh population in India with 1.1 million Sikhs as per 2001 census, and large immigrant communities of Sikhs can be found across India. However, Sikhs only comprise about 2% of the Indian population.^[297]



Sikhs celebrating Vaisakhi in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Sikh migration to Canada began in the 19th century and led to the creation of significant Sikh communities, predominantly in South Vancouver and Surrey, British Columbia, and Brampton, Ontario. Today temples, newspapers, radio stations, and markets cater to these large, multi-generational Indo-Canadian groups. Sikh festivals such as Vaisakhi and Bandi Chhor are celebrated in those Canadian cities by the largest groups of followers in the world outside the Punjab.

Sikhs also migrated to East Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. These communities developed as Sikhs migrated out of Punjab to fill in gaps in imperial labour markets.^[298] In the early twentieth century a significant community began to take shape on the west coast of the United States. Smaller populations of Sikhs are found within many countries in Western Europe, Pakistan, Mauritius, Malaysia, Philippines, Fiji, Nepal, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Singapore, United States, and many other countries.

Prohibitions in Sikhism

These prohibitions are strictly followed by initiated Khalsa Sikhs who have undergone baptism. While the Sikh gurus did not enforce religion and did not believe in forcing people to follow any particular religion in general, the Sikh community does encourage all people to become better individuals by following the Guru's Way (Gur-mat), as opposed to living life without the Guru's code of disciple (Man-mat):

4 major transgressions:^[299]

- Hair removal – Hair cutting, trimming, removing, shaving, plucking, threading, dyeing, or any other alteration from any body part is strictly forbidden.^[300]
- Eating the meat of an animal slaughtered the Muslim way (Kutha meat).^[301] This is the absolute minimum required by all initiated Sikhs. Many Sikhs refrain from eating non-vegetarian food, and believe all should follow this diet. This is due to various social, cultural, political, and familial aspects. As such, there has always been major disagreement among Sikhs over the issue of eating non-vegetarian food. Sikhs following the rahit (code of conduct) of the Damdami Taksal & AKJ also subscribe to this view. The Akali Nihangs have traditionally eaten meat and are famous for performing Jhatka.^{[302][303][304][305]} Thus, there is a wide range of views that exist on the issue of a proper "Sikh diet" in the Panth. Nonetheless, all Sikhs agree with the

minimum consensus that meat slaughtered via the Muslim (Halal) or Jewish (Shechita) methods is strictly against Sikh dogma and principles.^{[306][307]} The Akal Takht represents the final authority on controversial issues concerning the Sikh Panth (community or collective). The Hukamnama (edict or clarification), issued by Akal Takht Jathedar Sadhu Singh Bhaura dated February 15, 1980, states that eating meat does not go against the code of conduct of the Sikhs. Amritdhari Sikhs can eat meat as long as it is Jhatka meat.^[308]

- **Adultery:** Cohabiting with a person other than one's spouse (sexual relations with anyone who you are not married to).^{[309][310][311][312][313][314][315]}
- **Intoxication** – A Sikh must not take hemp (cannabis), opium, liquor, tobacco, in short, any intoxicant.^[316] Consumption of tobacco and intoxicants (hemp, opium, liquor, narcotics, cocaine, etc.) is not allowed.^{[317][318]} Cannabis is generally prohibited, but ritually consumed in edible form by some Sikhs.^{[319][320]} Some Sikh groups, like the Damdami Taksal, are even opposed to drinking caffeine in Indian tea. Indian tea is almost always served in Sikh Gurudwaras around the world. Some Akali Nihang groups consume cannabis-containing shaheedi degh (ਭੰਗ), purportedly to help in meditation.^{[321][322][323]} *Sūkha parshaad* (ਸੁੱਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ), "Dry-sweet", is the term Akali Nihangs use to refer to it. It was traditionally crushed and consumed as a liquid, especially during festivals like *Hola Mohalla*. It is never smoked, as this practice is forbidden in Sikhism.^[324] In 2001, Jathedar Santa Singh, the leader of Budha Dal, along with 20 chiefs of Nihang sects, refused to accept the ban on consumption of *shaheedi degh* by the apex Sikh clergy of Akal Takht - in order to preserve their traditional practices.^[325] According to a recent BBC article, "Traditionally they also drank shaheedi degh, an infusion of cannabis, to become closer with God".^[326] Baba Santa Singh was excommunicated and replaced with Baba Balbir Singh, who agreed to shun the consumption of *bhang*.^[327]

Other mentioned practices to be avoided, as per the Sikh Rehat Maryada:

- Piercing of the nose or ears for wearing ornaments is forbidden for Sikh men and women.^[328]
- Female infanticide: A Sikh should not kill his daughter; nor should he maintain any relationship with a killer of daughter.^[329]
- A Sikh shall not steal, form dubious associations or engage in gambling.^[330]
- It is not proper for a Sikh woman to wear veil or keep her face hidden by veil or cover.^[331]
- Sikhs cannot wear any token of any other faith. Sikhs must not have their head bare or wear caps. They also cannot wear any ornaments piercing through any part of the body.^[332]
- Hereditary priest – Sikhism does not have priests, as they were abolished by Guru Gobind Singh (the 10th Guru of Sikhism).^[333] The only position he left was a Granthi to look after the Guru Granth Sahib; any Sikh is free to become Granthi or read from the Guru Granth Sahib.^[333]

See also

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bebe Nanaki ■ Mai Bhago ■ Five Virtues ■ Hari Singh Nalwa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Indian religions ■ Turban training centre ■ Women in the Guru Granth Sahib |
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Notes

- i. *Sikhism* (commonly known as *Sikhī*) originated from the word *Sikh*, which comes from the Sanskrit root *śiṣya* meaning "disciple", or *śikṣa* meaning "instruction". Singh, Khushwant. 2006. *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-567747-8. p. 15. Kosh, Gur Shabad Ratnakar Mahan. https://web.archive.org/web/20050318143533/http://www.ik13.com/online_library.htm
- ii. "Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikh originated in India." Moreno, Luis; Colino, César (2010). *Diversity and Unity in Federal Countries* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=N5lpveRnSxEC&pg=PA207>). McGill Queen University Press. p. 207. ISBN 978-0-7735-9087-8.
- iii. "Sikhism rejects the view that any particular religious tradition has a monopoly regarding Absolute Truth. Sikhism rejects the practice of converting people to other religious traditions." Kalsi, Sewa Singh (2008). *Sikhism*. London: Kuperard. p. 24. ISBN 978-1-85733-436-4.
- iv. "As an Indian religion, Sikhism affirms transmigration, the continued rebirth after death". Brekke, Torkel (2014). Reichberg, G. M.; Syse, H. (eds.). *Religion, War, and Ethics: A Sourcebook of Textual Traditions* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=t3CFAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA672>). Cambridge University Press. p. 672. ISBN 978-1-139-95204-0 – via Google Books.
- v. "Sikhism, Indian religion founded in the Punjab in the late 15th century." (McLeod 2019/1998).

- vi. The Sikh scripture contains verses which have been literally interpreted as relevant to pilgrimage and taking dips in waters for salvific value; some criticize it (AG 358, 75); others support it (AG 623–624).
- vii. "Technically this would place the Sikh community's origins at a much further remove than 1469, perhaps to the dawning of the Sant movement, which possesses clear affinities to Guru Nanak's thought sometime in the tenth century. The predominant ideology of the Sant *parampara* in turn corresponds in many respects to the much wider devotional Bhakti tradition in northern India. (Pashaura and Fenech 2014, p. 35).
- viii. "Historically, Sikh religion derives from this nirguni current of bhakti religion." (Lorenzen 1995, pp. 1–2).
- ix. "In its earliest stage Sikhism was clearly a movement within the Hindu tradition; Nanak was raised a Hindu and eventually belonged to the Sant tradition of northern India." (McLeod 2019/1998).
- x. These views include Sikhs believing in achieving blissful mukhti while alive, Sikhs placing emphasis on the path of the householder, Sikhs disbelief in Ahinsa, and the Sikhs afterlife aspect of merging with God rather than a physical heaven.

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